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ABSTRACT

This Bulletin investigates the role of the principal in fostering a school climate conducive to collegial supervision--teachers observing teachers and working together for instructional improvement. Chapter 1 attempts to put into perspective the traditional responsibilities of the principal as instructional leader and teacher evaluator. Collegial supervision can be seen as a partial solution to the problem of finding the time and the personnel to support a thorough teacher evaluation program. Chapter 2 investigates the principal's role in establishing a context for collegial supervision. Principals must foster a climate for collegiality, establish a structure for peer supervision, and then combine the two into a program in which teachers can share their professional expertise. The structure of supervision and the operation of a collegial supervision program are the subjects of chapters 3 and 4, respectively. The final chapter suggests that the principal's role as instructional leader be restructured to meet the demands of modern school systems. This redesigned role emphasizes both the importance of the principal's involvement in the peer supervision process and the increased professional responsibility of teachers. Appended are 15 references. (MLF)

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Creating a School Context for Collegial Supervision: The Principal's Role as Contractor

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Carolyn L. Ruck

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Preface

It has become axiomatic that an effective school is a collegial school. In the best schools, researchers have found, the barriers that typically isolate teachers have come down and teachers work together to improve their practice of instruction.

The person most responsible for dismantling those barriers and instilling a norm of collegiality in a faculty is the principal. Thus growing numbers of school reformers, researchers, and central office administrators are exhorting principals to create collegiality in their schools. But no one, to our knowledge, has specifically told principals how they are to go about this task. Here lies the important contribution of this provocative and highly practical essay by Carolyn Ruck.

After explaining the rationale for a collegial supervision model, she details the steps a principal can take toward implementing it. Most of these steps apply generally not just to collegial supervision but to any kind of collegial program. Finally, she argues compellingly for a new definition of the principal's role better suited to the collegial model of schooling.

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Philip K. Piele
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Introduction

The concept of collegial supervision–teachers observing teachers and working together for instructional improvement–is currently experiencing a rebirth of interest. Under a variety of names, the process of peer observation and feedback is seen as a possible means of increasing teachers' accountability and frequency of supervision while at the same time breaking down some of the barriers that have isolated teachers and hindered them from collaborating.

Because collegial supervision takes place within the context of a particular school, the climate of that school–its goals, its commitment, its support structure--can determine whether a program of peer supervision will succeed or fail. And the primary determiner of that school climate is the building principal.

This Bulletin investigates the role of the principal in fostering a school climate conducive to collegial supervision. First, in chapter 1, it attempts to put into perspective the traditional responsibilities of the principal as instructional leader and teacher evaluator. In light of the complex demands on today's principals, collegial supervision can be seen as a partial solution to the problem of finding the time and the personnel to support a thorough formative and summative teacher evaluation program. It also has the potential additional benefit of encouraging collaborative and collegial relationships among teachers–relationships that seem to correlate positively with school effectiveness. Before implementing a peer supervision program, however, questions about the role of the principal in the process and the nature of the support system necessary to develop such a program need to be examined.

Chapter 2 investigates the principal's role in establishing a context for collegial supervision. Principals must foster a climate for collegiality, establish a structure for peer supervision, and then combine the two into a program in which teachers can share their professional expertise. This structure of supervision and the operation of a collegial supervision program are the subjects of chapters 3 and 4, respectively. Principals must play a major role in providing the motivation and commitment necessary to initiate such a program as well as marshalling the resources, incentives, and staff development activities necessary to maintain it.

The task of building a support structure for collegial supervision may be viewed by some principals as just another time-consuming responsibility added to an already impossible workload. The final chapter challenges this perspective and suggests that the principal's role as instructional leader be restructured to better meet the demands of modern school systems and teacher-centered programs such as peer

supervision. This redesigned role emphasizes both the importance of the principal's involvement in the peer supervision process and the increased professional responsibility of teachers.

Experience has shown that new educational programs rarely succeed without the support of the principal. Collegial supervision is no different, especially because of the importance of the principal's role in creating a school context conducive to collaboration and shared expertise. Although collegial supervision is not a panacea for current problems in education, it does hold the potential of mitigating some of them and of increasing the instructional and professional excellence of teachers. To understand how this may occur, it is helpful first to examine the present situation and how the process of collegial supervision might be incorporated into the existing structure.

Chapter 1

The Need for a Better System of Teacher Supervision

Two concepts have emerged from numerous studies conducted over the past several decades on effective schools and effective teaching. The first is that teachers have a greater impact on student learning than does specific curriculum, text materials, or media. The second is that the attitudes and actions of the building principal greatly influence the overall climate and effectiveness of the school. These two factors affect each other in many ways, but are perhaps most closely interrelated in the supervision/evaluation of teachers. It is here, however, that the clarity of the research breaks down.

On the one hand, strong evidence suggests that multiple observations of teachers using a pre- and post-conference supervision cycle can produce positive change in teaching strategies and teacher behavior. On the other hand, in the role of evaluator, the principal has the power to terminate or extend the teacher's contract. The inequality of power inherent in the principal/teacher relationship makes the element of trust, which is essential to supervision for instructional improvement, difficult at best. Mildred Ness summarizes this dichotomy:

> There is an assumption, both implied and stated, that the authority to evaluate personnel carries with it fear of being judged, and this fear stands in the way of helping teachers. There is also the belief that the administrator who is charged with evaluation of staff for the purpose of tenure and/or salary increment is too threatening to the teacher to be in a position to assist in the diagnosis of teaching strategies, improvement of classroom methodology, or effectiveness of instruction. Finally, there is a presumption that the teacher is too concerned with the impression he or she must make during an observation to expose any weakness or need for improvement in teaching performance. These beliefs and assumptions stem from following the traditional (and common) appraisal practice of evaluating a teacher on the basis of one or two observations a year during which one looks at a whole spectrum of teacher competencies and performs a summative task.

The obvious and easy solution to this dilemma was to exhort principals to observe teachers more than twice a year, to use formative as well as summative evaluations, and to develop their interpersonal communication skills. Unfortunately, obvious and easy solutions do not always work out in practice. While all of the above recommendations are excellent and should be adopted by principals, they lay

the full responsibility for a solution on the principal's shoulders. The implication was that only lazy, uncaring, or unskilled principals would fail to complete six or more observation cycles per year with every teacher in their building. It was only a matter of making time available and restructuring priorities. These assumptions, however, ignored some important changes in the role of the modern principal.

The Principal's Expanded Roles and Responsibilities

There was a time when school populations were small, communities were relatively stable and homogeneous, and principal teachers supervised small staffs of fellow teachers, solved minor problems, and carried out the wishes of the school board. Perhaps then it was realistic to expect the principal to be involved in instructional improvement at a "grassroots" level. Even this expectation, however, may fall prey to a tendency to romanticize the "good old days." Nonetheless, everyone agrees that the principal's role has expanded dramatically since then.

Today's principal must function in a highly structured bureaucracy, coordinating efforts through a hierarchy of district administrators and complying with state and federal laws, school board policies, and district goals. Communities are usually complex and highly mobile, and school populations are large, resulting in greater numbers of both certified and classified staff to supervise. A high school diploma is perceived by parents as the minimum credential needed to secure a "good" job, and the right to an education seems to have been legally interpreted as the right to be "work ready" upon graduation. Hence, accountability has become a key issue nationwide, and the person held most accountable–for shortcomings, at least–is the building principal.

Not only have pressures on the principal increased, so have responsibilities. Outside the school, principals are expected to foster positive public relations through involvement in community activities, membership in civic groups, or development of community education programs. In areas where school funding is dependent on popular support, principals are expected to meet with influential groups of voters and actively campaign for budget passage. In other areas, principals are expected to keep abreast of proposed legislation affecting education and to work for passage or defeat of education-related measures.

In many schools, principals are expected to handle scheduling, budgeting, and ordering of supplies for both certified and classified staff. They are responsible not only for activities scheduled during the school day, but also for extracurricular activities and use of the building by community groups. They may still handle most discipline problems and parental concerns. They are involved in Individualized Educational Plan (IEP) meetings and programs for exceptional students. In small schools, they may function as the school nurse, the counselor, or the athletics director. In addition, they oversee curriculum design and implementation and provide for staff development. Besides these onsite responsibilities, principals are also expected to be active professionally, attend professional meetings, and keep

current on research literature and trends in education. And, of course, near the top of the list is the duty of the principal to supervise and evaluate teachers.

What has been created goes well beyond the role of the traditional principal teachers. Today, principals are expected to have the political charisma of a John F. Kennedy, the tact of Henry Kissinger, and the energy of Superman or Wonder Woman. We are asking one person to be all things to all people and to do it well. Talking with principals about spending more time in classrooms observing teachers yields a fairly common response. "There's nothing I'd like more," most of them say.

> I like being with teachers and kids and I know it's important, but other things are important too. I can schedule an observation for second period in Ms. Jones' room, but if an angry parent comes in to see me, that has to be handled right then. By the end of the day, with district level meetings, constant interruptions, dozens of decisions to make, and paperwork piling up on my desk, I'm not always in the best frame of mind to do an objective evaluation and be fair to the teacher. Sure, I'd like to spend more time in classrooms, but I can't make my other responsibilities go away.

The Search for a Solution

Principals have, of course, developed a variety of strategies for fulfilling their role as instructional leader, especially in the evaluation of teachers. The most common solution is to delegate a portion of the responsibility for summative evaluations to other personnel, such as the vice principal or department chair. In some districts, staff positions–variously titled Division Leader, Subject Area Specialist, Instructional Specialist, and so forth–have been created to meet the need for more frequent teacher observation. Most of these supervisors provide evaluative data to the administrator, though some function independently from the evaluator role, concentrating on staff development and instructional improvement.

Although these solutions have increased the number of teacher observations and reduced the demands on the principal, they have not totally solved the problem. Both teachers and the public often view the creation of additional administrative positions for teacher evaluation as wasteful. Ratios of teachers to supervisors are still high, so observation for summative purposes still occurs only twice a year in many schools. Finally, even if teachers are observed more frequently, the evaluator still represents the administration and a relationship based on trust may be difficult to establish. Spreading the responsibility for teacher supervision among more administrators has enhanced the quality of summative evaluation for purposes of retention, but this tactic has much less potential for providing the nonthreatening, ongoing supportive supervision that research has shown to be essential for teacher development.

Collegial Supervision–A Possible Answer

One means of providing this supportive supervision is collegial observation. This is not a new concept, but it is experiencing renewed popularity as an idea whose time has come. Under a variety of names–peer supervision, peer coaching, collegial evaluation–the programs for having teachers observe other teachers all share several elements. First, the supervision process is usually totally removed from summative teacher evaluation–that is, the process that determines teachers' promotion, retention, or dismissal. Information gleaned by peer supervision is only shared with the principal if the teacher who was observed chooses to do so. Trust between peers is maintained by a high degree of confidentiality.

Second, participation in the process is usually voluntary, and teachers are often able to choose their own partners. Thus, the process has a builtin component of commitment and mutual respect. Finally, all programs contain a degree of structure, usually including a goal-setting process, a procedure for observation, and a format for sharing information. A timeline for completing the supervision cycle is also commonly included. Inherent in the process, then, are elements that provide direction, enhance communication, and allow participants to assess their results.

Collegial supervision, in tandem with administrative evaluation for summative purposes, could provide the missing element in instructional improvement. A peer supervision program is ideally suited to increase the frequency of formative evaluation for the purpose of instructional improvement while reaping the indirect benefits of increased professionalism and collegiality among teachers. The idea also has economic merit in that it uses an existing resource–the expertise of teachers–in a more effective way.

Collegial supervision raises some important questions, however, about the principal's role as instructional leader. It has the potential of freeing the principal from direct involvement in the formative supervision process while retaining the principal's role of summative evaluator. If a principal becomes totally detached from the peer evaluation system, then he or she may be perceived only as the "heavy" whose interest is in hiring and firing, but not in individual growth. Because effective collegial supervision systems require confidentiality, the principal may feel cut off from communication with teachers. If a principal's goal is to know everything that goes on in the school, when teachers fail to include the principal in all of their communication, they will be viewed as undermining that goal. Most importantly, if peer supervision is to succeed, the principal must provide a school climate conducive to collegiality and instructional improvement.

How does a principal provide such a climate for a process in which he or she has little or no part? The key appears to lie in reexamining the principal's role as instructional leader. Thus far in educational history, the principal's job has expanded primarily out of necessity rather than by design. In some ways, each additional responsibility was added to the instructional leadership role without integrating it into the whole or assessing its impact on the overall structure. Perhaps it is time to evaluate whether the composite structure meets current needs. Perhaps it is time to make a planned change in role definition rather than a reactive one.

Clarifying the principal's role in establishing a school climate conducive to collegial supervision is one way of approaching such a planned change.

Chapter 2

The Principal's Role in Fostering Collegiality among Teachers

Establishing a school context in which some form of collegial or peer supervision can flourish requires careful consideration and structuring by principals. Studies of effective inservice and staff development activities have confirmed what teachers already knew–that it is not sufficient merely to proclaim, "We will be starting a peer supervision program this year," and expect such a change to occur. The principal plays a key role in building a framework that will support and foster that change. With collegial supervision, moreover, a principal is dealing with three important concepts–Chapter first, collegiality; second, supervision; and third, the interrelationship between the two. For the total program to be a success, a framework supporting all three components must be in place.

Collegiality: What It Is and Why It Is Needed

In this chapter we examine the first of these elements–collegiality. The following two chapters address the structure of supervision and the task of adapting that structure to a collegial approach.

Anyone who has ever worked in a school system realizes that collegiality among educators is not something that just happens. It must be developed and nurtured in a climate conducive to sharing. For many years, in many schools the norm for teacher behavior has been isolation within the individual classroom. Occasionally, curriculum materials would be shared, but to voice concern about a teaching strategy or ask for advice concerning a management problem was tantamount to admitting incompetence. Silence lent credence to the myth that "no news is good news."

Roland Barth describes collegiality as "the least common form of relationship among adults in schools." Citing the work of Judith Warren Little (1981), he goes on to explain that

> collegiality is the presence of four specific behaviors. First, adults in schools talk about the practice of teaching and learning frequently, continuously, and in concrete and precise terms. Second, they observe each other teaching and administrating.

Third, they work on the curriculum together by planning, designing, researching, and evaluating. Finally, they teach each other what they know about teachers, learning, and leading.

Are Today's Teachers More Receptive to Collegiality?

A few years ago, principals attempting to introduce collegiality as a norm within their school had an uphill battle. In the last decade, however, three factors seem to have considerably weakened the barriers to teacher collaboration.

The most dramatic change was related to the passage of Public Law 94-142, which not only released many exceptional children from the isolation of their special classrooms, but also forced professionals by law to talk with one another. IEP (Individualized Educational Plan) meetings brought parents, administrators, specialists, special education teachers, and regular classroom teachers together to share information and solve common problems. Predictably, classroom teachers were the least prepared for these collegial relationships and initially the most defensive. Gradually, however, these teachers have become more open, better informed, and more willing to contribute their expertise. Not every school has capitalized on this opportunity for professional exchange of ideas, but overall the concept of "mainstreaming" has opened the way for teachers informally to observe one another in classrooms and to ask "experts" for help with curriculum materials and teaching strategies. The collegiality that has developed among the various groups who work with special students has helped to weaken the belief that what teachers do in the privacy of their own classrooms is their business.

The second factor, which has had a more subtle impact, appears to be the fairly consistent public criticism of education in general, and schools and teachers in particular, over the last several years. When teachers were held in high regard, it was easier to attribute poor performance to specific individuals, and the social practice among teachers seemed to be to "isolate" those individuals to "prevent contagion." When the entire system and all its members are held accountable, however, teachers are more likely to feel a collective responsibility for the quality of schools. Moreover, hard-working, dedicated teachers and administrators are tired of being the "scapegoats" for all of society's ills. Adversity tends to bring people together, and there is a strong movement in education to raise the status of the profession by collective, collaborative effort. More importantly, there is at least some recognition that individual achievement is not as important as group achievement in changing public opinion. Because a school may be judged on the performance of its weakest teacher, it becomes imperative for the whole staff to help every teacher become stronger and more effective.

Finally, the recent report by the Carnegie Forum's Task Force on Teaching as a Profession (1986) contends that isolation and lack of power are prime reasons why highly skilled teachers leave the teaching profession. Moreover, the report emphasizes that this pattern will need to be changed if schools are to attract the caliber of teachers necessary to improve the system. The Carnegie task force calls for increasing the professional status of teachers through redesign of the

organization.

> Because professionals themselves are expected to have the expertise they need to do their work, organizations that employ professionals are not typically based on the authority of supervisors, but rather on collegial relationships among the professionals. This does not mean no one is in charge, but it does mean that people practicing their profession decide what is to be done and how it is to be done within the constraints imposed by the larger goals of the organization.

Thus, the task force report not only cites increased collegiality as a way of attracting and keeping high quality teachers, but also calls for changes within the support structure of schools to enhance and encourage those relationships.

Nationally, then, the potential for establishing collegial relationships among teachers is more auspicious now than it has been in the past. It may also be an opportune time to establish peer supervision in schools as a means of enhancing professional communication and encouraging effective teaching practices. Both the rationale and the motivation are present, but neither will be significant unless principals take an active role in translating this receptiveness into a school context that promotes change.

Roland Barth maintains that "there is growing evidence that principals who hold collegiality as a goal can help schools move toward it." This movement must be multidimensional, involving not only concrete actions, but attitudes as well. Again summarizing the research of Little, Barth points out that

> a norm of collegiality in a school was related to four specific behaviors of the principal: (a) explicitly stating expectations for cooperation among teachers ("I expect all of us to work together, help one another, and make our knowledge available"); (b) providing a model for collegiality, that is, enacting it by joining with teachers and other principals in improving conditions in the school; (c) rewarding collegiality by granting release time, recognition, space, materials, or funds to support it; and (d) protecting teachers who engage in collegial behavior and who risk the retribution of their fellows.

In other words, the principal's role in establishing a school context for collegiality is really twofold. He or she must both model desirable traits and also foster and encourage those behaviors in others.

The Benefits of Collegiality

A principal must first be convinced that collegial relationships among teachers are worth developing–that they contribute to more effective school operation, a more positive educational climate, higher quality instruction, and improved student learning. It is crucial that the principal believe that when teachers share their collective expertise, the product can be better ideas and strategies for solving common problems. It is equally important that principals believe in the value of formative evaluation; that is, that frequent observations and sharing of information

can increase the instructional effectiveness of teachers.

The research of Rosenholtz (1986) supports this claim.

> Fruitful collegial exchange . . . seems to recycle synergistically. Here it is seen most clearly that some organizational settings foster teachers' learning opportunities and skill development more than do others. Collaborative norms represent a form of group problem-solving, social support, and ongoing professional development. As ideas are infused into the network, alternative and better solutions to classroom problems are found. In essence, good teachers, working with other good teachers, get even better.

In addition, collaboration and the accompanying norm of continuous improvement affect not only the quality of experienced teachers, but provide a positive support structure for beginning teachers as well. Collegial relationships also bring financial dividends by making scarce resources go further, as Rosenholtz explains:

> Collective growth toward the same purpose reduces the effort and time expenditure by any one person. With collective endeavors, for example, attending to the material requirements and organization of new instructional techniques or programs need not be duplicative; experiments that falter for lack of proper planning or forethought need not be doomed to repeated failure; successes that are discovered can be replicated, adapted, and celebrated by others, without exhaustive and frustrating reinvention. In terms of effort and time, frustration, and pleasure, then, learning to teach is far easier where colleagues share, pursue, and enjoy the same organizational mission.

Thus, principals who are willing to initiate and maintain the norm of collegiality in their schools can capitalize on the many advantages of shared teacher effort.

Setting Expectations for Collegiality

At the base of all relationships are mutual respect and trust. Elements that hamper collegial relationships include suspicion, competitiveness, and inflexibility. Open communication, sharing, and willingness to learn foster such relationships. It is these latter traits that principals must encourage if they want to build a school context that supports collegiality.

Communication

To foster open communication, principals must encourage professionals to communicate freely with one another and respect ideas so expressed. To make that communication meaningful, principals must also share decision-making and problem-solving authority with teachers. The sharing of authority gives weight to a principal's belief that teachers are professionals who play an important role in the operation of the school.

Traditionally, the principal has acted as a central switchboard and filtering agent for any communication between staff members, perpetuating the isolation of teachers. At its most destructive, this practice can degenerate into a "me/them" mentality. In collegial relationships, communication between individuals is direct, with the potential of the principal being a participant rather than an intermediary. Principals need to see this change as one that can increase their own freedom to communicate with teachers as well as a way of releasing the untapped problem-solving abilities of the entire staff.

When teachers begin to communicate more freely with other teachers, one likely product is the proliferation of ideas to solve various kinds of school problems. Initially, this reaction may overwhelm a principal. He or she may wish to be supportive, may lack adequate resources or authority to support all ideas. Moreover, the quality of solutions suggested may be widely disparate. It is important, however, that the principal withhold judgment on these new ideas.

Vincent Rogers, Cynthia Talbot, and Ellen Cosgrove talk about the importance of this element in successful businesses. Using excerpts from Peters and Waterman's book *In Search of Excellence* they point out that attitudes toward innovation and experimentation can be equally important in industry and education.

> If you want to understand the culture that encourages entrepreneurial activities at 3M, as good a starting point as any is . . . its "eleventh commandment." It is: "Thou shalt not kill a new product idea." If you want to stop a project aimed at developing a new product, the burden of proof is on the one who wants to stop the project, not the one who proposes the project. When you switch the burden from proving that the idea is good to the burden of proving that the idea is not good, you do an awful lot for changing the environment within the company with respect to the sponsorship of entrepreneurial people.

This same kind of attitude could be used effectively by principals who wish to encourage creativity, responsibility, and free exchange of ideas among teachers.

Principals can implement those ideas that are easy to complete and leave those that require more support or deliberation to the problem-solving abilities of the faculty as a whole. Rather than saying "no," a principal who is interested in fostering collegiality might say to the staff, "These are the advantages and disadvantages as I see them; here are the costs; what do you think we should do?" The ensuing dialogue has the effect of proclaiming the principal's respect for each teacher's opinion and may well lead to a creative solution. It is critical in the early stages of collegiality that teachers come to trust the principal's belief in their own expertise. If a principal continues to direct decision-making power to the teachers, he or she will have demonstrated commitment to collegiality.

Sharing

It is not surprising that many teachers need to be taught how to share ideas. Schools have traditionally interpreted the concept of the "independent learner" as the

"isolated learner," and most teachers' own experiences as students reinforced the belief that sharing answers was equivalent to cheating. Moreover, teachers may fear that giving advice to others may make them appear interfering or conceited, while asking for advice from others may make them seem incapable or ineffective. To alleviate these concerns, principals must convey to teachers that sharing ideas and helping one another are desirable professional activities. They must also provide teachers with frequent opportunities to practice sharing with one another.

Although opportunities for sharing exist in a wide variety of school-related activities, it is up to principals to structure such encounters so that teachers have a chance to interact meaningfully with one another. As Rosenholtz points out,

> In successful schools, norms of collaboration don't simply just happen. They do not spring spontaneously out of teachers' mutual respect and concern for each other; nor are they the result of serendipitous combinations of people. Rather, evidence suggests that they are structured in the workplace by frequent faculty contact and continuous opportunities for teacher interaction. At some schools, time is set aside by principals for meetings among faculty where joint planning and problem-solving occur . . . . At other schools, principals build interaction opportunities in decision-making about inservice programs . . . , or formally establish subgroups of faculty who are charged with particular technical decisions and responsibilities.

Some principals use other strategies for encouraging sharing. Barth, in his own experience as a principal, used the first twenty minutes of each faculty meeting to highlight teacher achievements. By holding each meeting in a different classroom, he provided an opportunity for the "host teachers" to describe the special characteristics of their curriculum or teaching activities. Another principal sets aside time at each faculty meeting for teachers to describe inservices they have attended, new ideas they have tried, or materials they have created. Presentations are rotated so that every teacher has several opportunities to share during the school year. Many principals establish either a "buddy system" to encourage teachers to work together or a mentor program to help beginning teachers get off to a good start. Still others have initiated staff development programs in which teachers and the principal are involved together in learning a new skill or technique such as Madeline Hunter's ITIP.

All of these activities and a host of others are conducive to sharing. The topic can be almost anything–problem students, curriculum, new techniques–as long as it is one that allows for teacher interaction. Norms for sharing may develop slowly, but, once established, can be transferred from one activity to another.

Willingness to Learn

Among the many myths in education is the belief that when people receive a diploma, degree, or certificate, it is time for them "to stop learning and start doing." We seem to hold the belief that learning is a finite activity and that at some point in time a person completes the learning process.

Teachers and principals are both susceptible to this myth, which is dangerous not only because it limits individual potential, but also because it is counter to the idea of collegiality–of gaining new ideas through shared expertise. Listen to Roland Barth:

> Learning always begins one rung on the ladder below the teacher. Teachers want children to learn but see their own learning as less necessary. Principals want teachers to learn but do not believe that a math workshop is appropriate for principals. Superintendents want principals to shape up, but few engage seriously in their own professional development. And so it goes . . . .

And the leader as learner is critical because there is a striking connection between learning and collegiality. The most powerful form of learning comes not from listening to the good words of others but from sharing what we know with others. Learning comes more from giving than from receiving . . . . By reflecting on what we do, by giving it coherence, and by sharing and articulating our craft knowledge, we make meaning; we learn. The best way, perhaps the only way, that schools are going to improve is by school people learning from and helping other school people.

Principals who want to foster collegiality and peer supervision in their schools must view learning as an ongoing developmental process. Principals also need to model willingness to learn. As Barth emphasizes, "When the leader is learner, when the principal's learning is continuous, visible, and exciting, a crucial . . . message is telegraphed: this school is a community of learners; learning is its most important characteristic; the principal is a first-class citizen of the community of learners, the head learner."

Implied in the willingness to learn is the willingness to make mistakes. The freedom to make mistakes is critical to the success of collegial supervision because colleagues need to be able to experiment with new strategies and different ideas if they are going to truly benefit from the process.

Seymour Papert, in his book *Mindstorms: Children, Computers, and Powerful Ideas*, provides a helpful analogy. He compares learning something new to the process of writing a computer program, and he emphasizes that the programmer rarely expects a new program to work correctly the first time. That does not make the program "wrong" or "bad." It only means it needs to be "debugged." The programmer knows that once the bugs are out of it, the program will run smoothly. Finding the bugs is just a part of the learning process.

This attitude is compatible with the process of collegial supervision. The concept of "debugging" could be used by principals to reduce teachers' fear of supervision. In Papert's orientation to learning, teachers can try new teaching strategies or techniques knowing that in all probability they will not work smoothly the first time. That is okay. It just means that the lesson needs to be "debugged." "Finding the bugs" is what the teachers and the peer supervisor do together.

Chapter 3

The Structure of Supervision

The concepts of supervision and evaluation have so many negative connotations that it may be difficult to convey to teachers the kind of experiences peer supervision should entail. It would be untrue to say that supervision among colleagues does not involve judgment or criticism or any of the other things teachers fear. It is far better to acknowledge that collegial supervision does include many of the same processes as summative evaluation. Nevertheless, the potential support of peers and the lessened threat to job security of a peer evaluation system greatly enhance the opportunities for meaningful feedback.

In approaching supervision, teachers need to be realistic about what the process entails. The structure of supervision mandates that the supervisor must observe the supervisee in the performance of a particular task in order to make informed comments about the latter's work. As every teacher knows, allowing someone else to watch you teach is risky. It does not matter if you have been teaching for twenty years or if the visitor is from Timbuctu. While being observed, you suddenly become very conscious of what you are doing and wonder continuously if the observer understands why you made one particular teaching decision instead of another. Principals must realize that, although peer supervision might alleviate some of this nervousness because observers are "in the same boat," it will never totally eliminate it. Teachers who are willing to be vulnerable in this way need to be recognized and supported.

Supervision also entails judgment and evaluation, a fact that must be dealt with squarely. Even though collegial supervision will not be the basis for a decision about the teacher's retention, the observer must provide meaningful feedback or the process would have no value. If the goal of the program is to have teachers pool their expertise for instructional improvement, then the observer must be able to discern the strengths and weaknesses of the lesson and share them with the teacher. Consequently, the peer observer must be able to judge and evaluate at several points in the process–in deciding what information to collect, in focusing on certain parts of the lesson or on certain behaviors of the teacher or students, and in deciding how to share this information.

A distinction must be made, however, between making judgments and being judgmental. The former is part of decision-making and refers to weighing objective criteria. The second refers to subjectively evaluating the "goodness" or "badness" of something. Making judgments and evaluating effectiveness are skills requiring

professional expertise. Being judgmental requires no such skill, merely the ability to form an opinion. Principals need to ensure that teachers understand the difference between these two terms and work to eliminate the use of the latter. Peer supervisors cannot realistically eliminate the use of judgments from the process, but they can be shown how to avoid being judgmental.

The Clinical Supervision Model

It is to be hoped that most collegial supervision programs will use a feedback structure similar to that of clinical supervision. Edward F. Iwanicki states that "clinical supervision . . . evolved in education from the need to provide teachers with a highly personalized system of guidance and support in the professional development process." Ralph L. Mosher and David E. Purpel further clarify the technique:

> Clinical supervision aims to help the teacher capitalize on his strengths, compensate for his weaknesses, and develop his own individual and "best" teaching style. The means of doing so, derived from reinforcement theory in learning, is to reinforce effective teaching and permit ineffective teaching to extinguish. Second, within the very broad limits of competence defined by the supervisor, the teacher has freedom and is urged to develop a teaching style of his own. The autonomy of the teacher is, then, both a strategy and a belief about the individual and learning.

According to Noreen B Garman, clinical supervision is a process that involves the concepts of collegiality, collaboration, skilled service, and ethical conduct.

> The nature of the service is made explicit to the teacher who becomes a client-colleague during the supervisory alliance. The professional practice of clinical supervision is derived from the assumptions that the supervisor understands the nature of educational encounters and has the inquiry skills to make sense out of the events under consideration.

In practice, the clinical supervision model requires that supervisors collect objective, persuasive data in one of many forms (selective verbatim, Flanders Interaction Analysis, At Task coding, or some other format) and then convey that information to teachers in such a way that they draw conclusions from the data. This kind of structure allows the teacher to decide which elements of the lesson are most in need of change and to control the direction of that change. The role of the supervisor is to point out the most significant portions of the data and to pose questions that lead teachers to focus on strengths and weaknesses.

Training in Supervision Methods

Regardless of the model used, however, principals must realize that teachers

need training in basic supervision methods if they are to be effective in helping one another. Training in data gathering and analysis techniques will also enable teachers to make more systematic observations and to identify teaching patterns. Principals must provide teachers with opportunities to practice these techniques and receive feedback on their proficiency in implementing them. This training is probably accomplished most easily by requiring successful mastery of one technique before going on to another.

The principal may decide it is a good idea to bring in an expert in supervision from a local college or university. Such training must not be a "one shot" inservice but an ongoing program. The visiting expert can bring in videotaped or audiotaped sample lessons for teachers to use to practice their skills in a nonthreatening environment before trying them on one another. Another approach is for teachers to try out the skills by supervising student teachers. Here again, teachers can gain experience in classroom observation and meaningful supervision without the threat of self-disclosure.

Besides helping with the technical skills involved in supervision, principals need to provide teachers with training and practice in interpersonal communication. In terms of supervision, this means being able to formulate nonthreatening statements and appropriate questions. It means being able to reflect, paraphrase, and restate. It means knowing the difference between being honest and being opinionated. It also means preserving the self-respect and self-worth of the individual while allowing him or her freedom to experiment, make mistakes, and change.

Principals, unfortunately, do not always have as many opportunities to practice these behaviors as they may wish because the bureaucratic nature of schools often places them in a position in which they must demand compliance to policy regardless of its wisdom. Need for efficiency and rapid decision-making also increases the prevalence of autocratic rather than participatory interactions. Nonetheless, to encourage collegial supervision, principals must make a concerted effort to model these interpersonal skills. It is especially important that these skills be used in the principal's own supervision cycles; much evidence suggests that this practice greatly enhances the effectiveness of summative evaluations.

Teachers must also have the opportunity to apply these communication skills and to receive feedback on their use. These experiences can be provided in tandem with training in supervision skills or they can be provided in other contexts. The parent-teacher conference, for instance, requires many of the same communication skills. One high school, for example, uses simulations of conferences to develop teachers' interpersonal skills. Considerable effort on interpersonal communication skills is justified because they apply in such a variety of school situations.

Are Supervisors "Superior"?

The structure of supervision also brings with it another difficulty that must be overcome in developing a successful peer supervision program–the implied superior-

subordinate relationship between the supervisor and supervisee. Using the term "peer coaching" does not eliminate this problem because one assumes that a coach, too, has more expertise and authority than do the individual players.

Collegial supervision must meet this problem head on. If teachers are going to let others come into their classrooms and watch them teach, they should expect those observers to be fairly knowledgeable about what teachers do and how they do it. Most teachers, I believe, would be willing to acknowledge that the majority of their colleagues know at least as much about teaching as they do.

The negative connotations associated with the role of supervisor arise largely from the attitude of superiority that is often projected–an underlying belief that "I know what's best for you." A large part of this attitude may be eliminated if principals encourage use of the clinical supervision model, which recognizes that the teacher being observed is the primary decision-maker and change agent.

Principals can also correct this attitude by emphasizing the importance of different teaching and learning styles. Robert Travers points out that

> the word teaching refers to a very broad class of activities. The particular activities that constitute teaching in any particular situation depend upon how the school is organized, the nature of the program, the structure of the curriculum, the teaching materials used, the expectations of parents, and the social context of education . . . . Research shows quite clearly that pupils adapt well to many different approaches to teaching, calling for very different ways of functioning on the part of the teacher . . . . There is no single simple method of evaluating teacher effectiveness, because there is no single concept of what the teacher should be undertaking in the classroom.

A style or strategy that works well for one teacher may not work at all for another. Principals can help teachers to develop an appreciation for a variety of teaching methods. Indeed, a collegial supervision program can expose teachers to a variety of approaches by giving them the chance to watch other teachers in action.

Perhaps an even more fundamental way of solving this problem is to define the supervisor's area of superiority. A supervisor may not be able to "teach it better," but he or she can often "see it better." When teachers are teaching, they are continually making conscious and unconscious decisions. They are trying to meet certain objectives, follow lesson plans, and keep students on task. They are constantly adjusting what they do to the verbal and nonverbal responses of students. They are usually so busy "doing" that they have difficulty afterward recalling exactly what they did or said. And while they might be able to recall accurately how their brightest or most incorrigible students behaved, they will probably be unable to describe the behavior of all of their students in detail. This is where a supervisor–peer or otherwise–has a "superior" advantage. Detached from the proceedings, the observer can see for them and clarify things that they might have missed. Although teachers retain the right to interpret what is seen in terms of what they do or do not want to happen in their classroom, they can easily credit a supervisor with a more comprehensive view of the forest while they themselves may only be aware of individual trees.

It is this "superiority of view" that principals must emphasize in developing a

peer supervision program. Peer supervision is a temporary superior-subordinate relationship that reverses itself whenever the roles of peer supervisors are exchanged. If the colleague can bring to the encounter a personal experience or strategy that worked in a similar situation, so much the better, but it is not necessary. More importantly, what the peer supervisor can bring is a wider scope and a different perspective. The peer supervisor does not observe because he or she is a better teacher or knows the answers to all possible problems. Instead, the role of the observer is to help other teachers to gain a more accurate picture of the teaching act or to better define the nature of the problem if there is one.

Chapter 4

The Collegial Supervision Program

Synergy is the idea that the whole may be greater than the sum of its parts. In many ways, this concept seems to apply to the process of collegial supervision. While a principal must consider the separate support systems needed to build a school climate conducive to collegiality and to formative evaluation, a complete program of peer supervision necessitates some additional considerations.

Getting the Program Started

In some school districts, teachers who have had training in clinical supervision or in peer coaching have received permission to initiate a collegial supervision program on their own. In most schools, however, the responsibility for starting such a program will probably rest with the building principal.

As already emphasized, an approach that mandates teachers' participation will be the least productive method. The consensus of those who have been involved in collegial supervision seems to be that the best way for a principal to get a program started is to involve teachers in a staff development activity in which the goals and procedures of peer supervision are explained and in which participation is voluntary. If the efforts of this initial group of teachers are well supported and perceived by others as worthwhile during the first year, then other teachers will probably choose to participate in the project in subsequent years.

This approach incorporates the desirable elements of a "grassroots movement," though the principal must provide the original impetus. New participants can form their own teams or they can be teamed with experienced participants. Triads can be created by adding a new member to an existing team, or partners can split up, each picking up a new person to form another team. (For those of us who remember cotillions, this last arrangement is similar to the concept of "snowballing" to get a dance started.) Whatever arrangement is used, it will be up to the principal to ensure continued support and encouragement to the participating teachers and to make sure that word about their efforts is communicated to the rest of the staff.

Helping to Form Partnerships

The expertise of the principal may also be called into play when peer supervision teams are being formed. While the voluntary nature of collegial relationships is important, it is equally important to the success of the program to ensure compatibility among participants. Because the principal usually has more knowledge about the teaching styles and strengths of the building staff, he or she may be in a position to suggest potential collegial relationships. It should be stressed, however, that these pairings should not be forced, but rather that the principal should be available to provide input into the selection process.

The principal may also become involved in helping to maintain peer relationships. Inherent in all human interactions is the potential for misunderstanding and conflict, and peer supervision can produce very intense and personal involvements. A principal may occasionally need to function as a referee or a sympathetic listener. It is important that the principal not be judgmental or appear to take sides if an interpersonal conflict arises, but rather use communication and counseling skills to help the persons involved to work out their differences. However, as an objective observer, the principal can potentially function as a neutral sounding board to help eliminate misunderstandings and maintain team integrity.

Providing Material Support and Incentives

A collegial supervision program demands that teachers spend a great deal of time meeting together, observing one another, and sharing ideas. Some of the rewards for these efforts are inherent in the peer supervision structure. Feelings of comradeship and mutual support, for instance, are innate payoffs to collegiality, and most teachers respond positively to the opportunity to learn new ideas. It is unrealistic, however, to assume that these intrinsic rewards will be sufficient to sustain a collegial supervision program for very long. Time is a very precious commodity to teachers, and they must allocate it carefully among competing priorities. Without additional incentives, the collegial supervision process may be supplanted by other activities that seem more essential or beneficial.

The principal has a major role in allocating resources to support collegial supervision and in providing rewards and incentives for it. Additional resources do not necessarily have to be budgeted specifically for the peer supervision program. Principals can often use existing funds in new ways. In fact, some forms of support involve little or no monetary expenditure.

One of the major supports a principal can provide is scheduling. If teachers are going to be able to observe other teachers, the observers must be freed from their own classroom responsibilities at a time when other classes are in session. The principal has the ability to facilitate this process in a variety of ways. The most obvious is to arrange faculty schedules so that preparation periods for team members are complementary. In other words, one team member is teaching when the other member is free to make an observation. Although this arrangement means that

teachers will occasionally have to sacrifice their preparation periods and it does not allow for conference time, it is a workable solution. Principals can compensate teachers for the additional time commitment by occasionally hiring a substitute teacher to provide them with curriculum development time.

Another solution is to provide substitutes for teachers participating in collegial evaluation as a way of freeing them to make observations. In some schools, the principal has acted as the substitute whenever possible, not only to reduce costs but also to keep in touch with kids and classrooms. Some principals have hired "roving" substitutes who take over classes for several teachers in turn.

J.D. Saphier refines this last solution by suggesting what he calls his "$900 idea." He recommends hiring a substitute for one day a week for teachers who are visiting other teachers in the building. The substitute is responsible for bringing in his or her own lessons so that teachers do not have to devote additional time to preparation. These lessons are designed around enrichment topics like critical thinking that can be used with a variety of different classes or grade levels. Because substitute teachers know that this is "long-term employment" (once a week for approximately twenty weeks), they are willing to put out the extra effort to design their own lessons. Because teachers do not have to plan for the substitutes, they can concentrate their attention on the collegial supervision process.

Whatever method is used, it is important for the principal to take an active role in scheduling arrangements. If teachers have to juggle their own schedules or ask other teachers for special favors in order to make an observation, the odds are that they will not do it very often. If, however, the principal has taken the trouble to plan teachers' schedules so that arranging for observation is less problematic, there is builtin motivation to complete the process.

Schedules themselves can also be used as rewards or incentives. Teachers involved in collegial supervision could be given preference when scheduling classes, preparation time, or additional duties (like hall monitor or playground supervisor). The freedom to exert some control over their day is a high priority for most teachers, so giving them input into their daily schedule would be a great motivator. An even stronger incentive might be to eliminate some of the additional duty assignments for teachers involved in peer evaluation. The prospect of having an extra twenty minutes during the day for oneself instead of being "on patrol" could be a highly valued reward.

Another area in which principals can provide support and incentives is through budgeting. Obviously, a principal needs to ensure that all teachers have adequate resources to do their jobs, but most schools have some funds available each year for purchase of new curriculum materials and supplies. Teachers involved in collegial supervision could be given priority in requesting new materials, or a small portion of the budget could be set aside specifically for their use. This latter option again increases the teachers' feelings of control and contributes to an overall recognition of professionalism.

Some teachers would also respond positively to the incentive of extra funding for student-related activities. Money for field trips, for instance, is usually limited. Teachers involved in collegial supervision might be given first choice in the use of

these funds. This idea rewards not only teachers, but their students as well.

Principals can structure rewards based on learning. Opportunities to visit classrooms in other schools or districts could be an incentive for many teachers. Monetary support to attend a conference or inservice of their choice is a reward for others. Districts could even make participation in a collegial supervision program equivalent to a certain number of credit hours on the salary schedule so that gradually teacher involvement would result in salary advancement.

Principals can sometimes provide direct monetary rewards for teachers who participate in peer supervision. In districts where sufficient funds exist, teachers could be given a bonus or stipend for participation in the program. Teachers could even be awarded "scholarships" that could be used to take courses of their choice at a local college or university.

Approval is another potential reinforcer at the disposal of the principal. Simply communicating often to teachers that their participation in collegial supervision is recognized can have a positive influence on continuance. Writing a letter for a teacher's file or making a positive reference on the annual summative evaluation form are other ways of showing approval. A principal might simply invite all participating teachers to lunch one day. The message "You're doing a great job" is not one that teachers hear often, so its impact as a motivator is substantial.

Principals can also use positive public relations as an incentive for teachers. The concept of collegial supervision should be carefully explained to the school board, and the appropriate teachers given credit for their participation. Other teachers should also be thoroughly informed of the goals of the process and kept updated on new ideas and positive attainments. Certificates of achievement could be presented to participating teachers at an end-of-the-year meeting, and the receipt of that honor publicized in the local newspaper. Participants could also be invited to speak to community groups, either explaining the collegial supervision process or sharing techniques they have learned.

In sum, principals can exercise a wide variety of options in providing material support and psychological incentives to teachers who are willing to invest their time in a collegial supervision program. The most important thing to remember about this support structure is that it does not have to be costly, but it does have to be thoughtfully conceived. That is, it should be tailored to the individual characteristics of teachers in that school. By asking teachers which incentives would be most meaningful to them and by allocating resources creatively to meet those needs, principals can provide within the school context a reward system designed to sustain a long-term peer supervision program.

Designing Staff Development

Collegial supervision can be of considerable assistance to principals in the area of staff development. Because teachers are sharing ideas and experimenting with new strategies, there is the potential for creating a "need to know" demand for inservice activities. Principals should remain alert to these opportunities and

encourage teachers to suggest areas where staff training would be beneficial.

As mentioned earlier, some staff development activities are essential to a successful collegial supervision process. These are in the areas of supervision techniques, goal-setting, and interpersonal communication skills. Other activities may grow out of the formative evaluation process. For instance, teachers may request a workshop on questioning strategies or different models of teaching if their observations create a desire for more knowledge in these areas.

In staff development planning, principals can take advantage of the collegial process by involving faculty in choosing, prioritizing, and scheduling activities. The principal can function as a resource person, but the teachers themselves can take primary responsibility for their learning. Inservice programs can also be used to capitalize on the strengths of particular staff members, providing additional recognition for the strongest teachers. Most importantly, principals can use this opportunity to make staff development truly relevant to teacher needs. Collegial supervision programs can be instrumental in creating inservice activities designed by and for teachers.

Balancing Confidentiality and the Principal's Curiosity

One of the most challenging aspects of establishing a school context for collegial supervision is balancing a principal's need to know about what is going on in the school with the equally important need to preserve the confidentiality of peer interactions. Principals need to realize that the trust relationship needed for peer supervision is fragile and could easily be disrupted if one teacher felt another was "carrying tales" to the principal. On the other hand, principals cannot divorce themselves totally from the collegial supervision process and expect it to run totally on its own. The interest and support of the principal is essential if teachers are to perceive that the administration is supportive of their efforts.

Principals must come to terms with this dilemma and seek to maintain a balance. They should feel free to ask teachers supportive open-ended questions such as "Is scheduling working?" or "Is there anything you need?" These kinds of questions indicate interest and willingness to help; in most cases, teachers will then open up and share their experiences. Moreover, if principals follow these exchanges with the kinds of support requested, teachers will probably begin to seek out the principal to share more information.

What principals want to avoid is an appearance of trying to control the process. This is not easy when as instructional leaders they have the primary responsibility for what goes on in the schools. Moreover, principals will be naturally curious to know if the peer observers see the same patterns and behaviors as they do. In addition, principals may want to direct the focus of the collegial supervision team into those specific areas that they perceive as needing the most attention, regardless of the wishes of the teachers. To act on any of these feelings denies the professional judgment of teachers and will probably undermine the collegial supervision process.

To not act, however, is somewhat contrary to the traditional role of principal as instructional leader. Earlier, it was suggested that perhaps the fault may not be in the process, but rather in our failure to reexamine the role of the modern principal. Providing a school context supportive of collegial supervision may, indeed, necessitate a change in the way we envision the principal's involvement in instructional improvement. The analogy of a building contractor may be helpful in identifying a promising direction for that change.

Chapter 5

The Principal as Instructional Contractor

There was a time when it was important for a man to be able to build his own house from start to finish. Unless he lived in a large town or was very wealthy, there was no other way to provide whatever local materials were available and convert them into some sort of structure that would meet his needs. Of ocurse, the end product might not be large or fancy--in fact, it might be a patchwork--but in those simpler times, the builder did not have to worry about the intricacies of indoor plumbing, electrical wiring, or building codes.

These days, people rarely build a house all by themselves. All or part of the work is contracted out to specialists. The expertise of electricians, plumbers, framers, masons, and roofers needs to be coordinated to produce a satisfactory end result, but it is a generally accepted practice that this sort of team effort produces a much better dwelling in a shorter period of time than most of us could achieve if we had to build the whole thing ourselves.

Perhaps it is time to view the role of the principal as instructional leader from a similar perspective. There may have been a time when it was appropriate for principals to do it all themselves, because there was no one else to do it. With the increased specialization in today's schools, perhaps it is time to change the principal's role from that of prime laborer to one of team coordinator. In terms of support for peer supervision especially, the principal's new role seems to parallel most closely that of the building contractor.

A Helpful Analogy

How are these two roles alike? On a construction site, the contractor is the one who must translate the architect's design into reality. So, too, in establishing a peer supervision system or any other instructional improvement program, it is the responsibility of the principal to interpret community and district goals into workable objectives for his or her own building. The contractor must be able to visualize the end result and then determine the order of work that will be necessary to bring the plan to fruition. Likewise, the principal must be able to envision the overall effectiveness of the school's operation and be able to analyze the steps that must be

taken if a peer supervision program is to be successful.

The contractor must assemble a working crew and be able to communicate to them the overall design that they are to achieve. This requires an understanding of the level of competence of each worker so that tasks are assigned appropriately. In establishing a peer supervision program, the principal must also determine how the participating teachers will be selected and make sure that the staff understands the overall goals of the program. This necessitates an appreciation of different teaching styles, levels of expertise, and readiness in order to ensure that supportive collegial relationships are established.

Both contractors and principals have primary responsibility for establishing timelines, adjusting schedules, ordering supplies and materials, allocating budgets, and coordinating the overall project. Both need to know when to call in experts for special projects, and both must be available to help work through special problems. Most importantly, both need to be visible supporters of the work that is being done–there to coordinate, to praise, to motivate, and to keep the operation running smoothly.

Neither contractors nor principals need to do all the building themselves. Contractors do not have to hammer in nails, though they might wish to set a few to increase their credibility. They do not have to stand over each worker and supervise every step–in fact, to do so would probably communicate lack of confidence and create friction. They assume that the workers they have selected will have the expertise to complete the necessary tasks. They may make suggestions or spot checks, but they normally wait until the worker is satisfied that the job is completed before making the final inspection. They are close enough to the project to spot major problems, but not so close as to interfere with the workers completing their own jobs.

In a collegial supervision program, principals, too, need to maintain involvement but avoid interference. They may become a part of a peer team if they, too, wish to teach and receive feedback–and such involvement does heighten the teacher/administrator trust relationship–but they do not need to be involved in or privy to individual conferences between teachers. Like contractors, they need to assume that the teachers involved are professionals who will be able to apply their expertise. It also seems reasonable to expect that teachers will invite interested principals to see the results of their efforts once those teachers are satisfied with the end result, but even if they do not, there should be some carryover from the peer supervision program to what the principal can observe during the summative evaluation. To make the program work, principals must project confidence in teachers' abilities to analyze their strengths and weaknessses, determine potential alternatives, and implement strategies for change on their own.

The concept of the role of the principal as an instructional "contractor" or facilitator shares many of the same elements as that of an instructional leader. As Wynn De Bevoise explains in her "Synthesis of Research on the Principal as Instructional Leader,"

> We broadly interpret the concept of instructional leadership to encompass those actions that a principal takes, or delegates to others, to promote growth in student learning. Generally such actions focus on setting schoolwide goals, defining the purpose of schooling, providing the resources needed for learning to occur, supervising and evaluating teachers, coordinating staff development programs, and creating collegial relationships with and among teachers.

An important difference, however, lies in the connotation society places on the term *leader*. We tend to picture a leader as the person in charge who leads the troops and makes all the decisions. A collegial system, however, is the antithesis of this localized control. Anyone may lead, but no one has sole control. The contractor role, on the other hand, is designed to allow teamwork to occur. The connotation here is one of coordinator or facilitator–still in charge of the total project but orchestrating individual efforts and guiding decisions rather than controlling them.

Advantages of a New Perspective

There may be some resistance to changing the principal's role from a leader who controls to a leader who coordinates. There are also those who claim that the old ways were best and we should all spin our own cloth, raise our own food, and build our own houses. We tend to glorify the past and forget that traditions are more often formed by circumstance than by choice. The Carnegie forum's task force report highlighted this danger in addressing the problems with today's schools.

> The country is in a trap of our own making .... We are doing better on the old goals, often at the expense of making progress on the goals that count the most. Because we have defined the problem of the schools in terms of decline from earlier standards, we have unwittingly chosen to face backwards when it is essential that we face forward.

We should face forward in redesigning the principal's role as well. Choosing to become an instructional contractor has several advantages for principals. First, contractors are able to coordinate several projects at one time because the work will continue without the need for their constant presence. This freedom of movement is essential for the modern principal who has responsibility for a wide variety of inschool and district activities.

Second, while the contractor must understand all the facets of building, he does not have to be a licensed plumber or electrician himself. He can rely on the expertise of others. Moreover, he can expect the master carpenters to train apprentices and develop the skills of the less experienced. His responsibility is to evaluate the finished product. For principals, a collegial system that capitalizes on teachers' professional expertise helps meet the need for subject area or grade level specialists to work with teachers and reduces the impossible expectation that the principal be an expert in all areas. Moreover, the task of developing and helping less experienced teachers can be shared with or left largely to experienced teachers.

Finally, the contractor role allows collegial and professional relationships to flourish among teachers without isolating the principal from the process. Not only is this situation essential in establishing a school context for peer supervision, but also it can result in the kind of positive, collaborative climate that characterizes effective schools. Redesigning the principal's role allows him or her to become a collaborator too. Even more importantly, it frees teachers to participate to the maximum of their professional potential.

Conclusion

Collegial or peer supervision/evaluation is one way that principals can capitalize on the untapped resource of teacher expertise. Teachers observing teachers for the purpose of formative evaluation can increase the instructional excellence of a staff, thereby contributing to student learning and achievement. Moreover, this process helps to build collegial relationships among teachers. Researchers have found such a norm of collaboration to be linked to effective schools.

Collegiality does not just happen. It must be developed in a school context that supports sharing, open communication, and learning. Principals have the major role in establishing that context. The attitudes of principals, their commitment and willingness to allocate resources, and their ability to provide incentives and rewards make a major difference in whether or not a peer supervision program will succeed.

Leaders of educational reform are calling for a future where teachers will receive greater recognition as professionals and schools will be redesigned to encourage teacher collaboration. Collegial supervision provides one means of reaching those goals.

Ironically, principals, too, need a school context that provides them opportunities for collegial support and collaborative relationships. It is quite possible that forward-looking districts should consider implementing for principals many of the same support activities that have been suggested for teachers. Principals might well benefit from a collegial supervision program of their own.

Principals should also benefit from a reexamination of their role as instructional leader. Collegial supervision programs may initiate some changes that are long overdue. Granted, the task of establishing a school context supportive of peer supervision is complex. Yet the long-term promise of such a school context is that, as teachers take on more of the responsibility for their own supervision and professional growth, principals will be freed to provide better overall coordination of the instructional programs in their schools.

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